

Appl. No. 10/665,968
Amdt. dated January 24, 2005
Reply to Office action of October 25, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-29 were originally filed and are currently pending in the application.

In this amendment, Claims 3, 4, 8, 10-12, 16, 18, 26 and 27 have been amended.

Claims 1, 2, 14 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto.

Claims 5-7, 9, 13, 17, 19-25, 28 and 29 remain unchanged.

In accordance with the new rules, all the claims are shown above, and the amended claims are shown in a redlined format. The amendment to the specification is made by replacing the paragraph with the paragraph set forth above. As set forth below, the amendments to the Claims are believed to place the Claims in condition for allowance. In view of the amendments, as discussed below, reconsideration of the Application and issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicant notes that the Examiner objected to Claims 3, 5-10, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 26 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that they would be allowable if amended to be in independent form and to include the elements of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 3 has been amended to be in independent form and to include the elements of Claims 1 and 2. Claim 3 is thus believed to be in condition for allowance. Applicant notes that the amendment to Claim 3 provides that the recess ceiling grooves "grooves contact said upper surface or are spaced slightly from said upper surface." As set forth in paragraph [0039] of the application the grooves "contact, or are spaced only slightly from,

the gangway upper surface bottom side 20." Thus, this does not add new matter to Claim 3. In addition, it does not substantially alter the scope of Claim 3. Hence, Claim 3 as currently amended is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 4 has been amended to depend from Claim 3, and Claims 5-7 depend from Claim 4. Thus, Claim 4-7 are believed to be allowable along with Claim 3. In addition, Claims 11-13 have been amended to depend from Claim 3. Thus, Claims 11-13 are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 8 has been amended to be in independent form and to incorporate the elements of Claim 1, from which Claim 8 originally directly depended. Claim 8 is thus believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 9 depends from Claim 8 and is similarly believed to be allowable.

Claim 10 also originally depended directly from Claim 1 and has been amended to be placed in independent form and to include the elements of Claim 1. Claim 10 is therefore believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 16 as filed depended from independent Claim 14 via Claim 15. Claim 16 has been amended to be in independent form to include the elements of Claims 15 and 14. Claim 16 is thus believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 17 depends from Claim 16 and is also believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 18 has been amended to depend from Claim 16 and is now also believed to be allowable. Claims 19-24 depend from Claim 18 (and thus now depend from allowable Claim 16) and are believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 25 has been amended to depend from Claim 16 and is also

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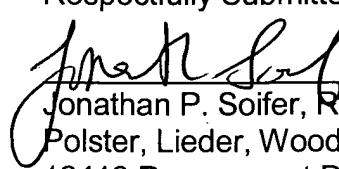
believed to be allowable.

Claim 26 originally depended from independent Claim 14 via Claim 25. Claim 26 has been amended to be placed in independent form and to include the elements of Claims 14 and 25. Claim 26 is thus believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 27 has been amended to depend from allowable Claim 26, and Claims 28-29 depend from Claim 27. Thus, Claims 27-29 are believed to be allowable along with Claim 26. Hence, in view of the above noted amendments, Claims 3-12, 16-24 and 26-29 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Thus, only claims 1, 2, 14, and 15, stand rejected. In order to expedite issuance of a patent from this application, Claims 1, 2, 14 and 15 have been canceled 11 without prejudice to filing a continuation with respect thereto. In canceling Claims 1, 2, 14 and 15, Applicant is not conceding that the Examiner's rejection of the claims is proper, and Applicant reserves the right to file a continuation with respect to Claims 1, 2, 14 and 15.

In view of the foregoing, Claims 3-13 and 16-29 are believed to be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowability with respect to these claims is thus respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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